

4 September 2023

# PCS members in ISS begin five days of strike action

PCS members in three major Whitehall departments told us why they are taking strike action for five days.

Cleaners, security guards and support staff working for the outsourced contractor ISS at the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, the Department for Business & Trade and Department for Science, and the Innovation & Technology (all formerly part of BEIS) are taking action this week, from **September 4 to 8**, after being offered a below-inflation pay rise.

Today (4), at the first picket line of the week on Victoria Street in central London, dozens of members gathered to show their collective strength, waving PCS flags, carrying placards, blowing horns, leafleting passers-by, and dancing to music that was blasting out from a speaker.

Angry, however, at being offered a 2.2% rise when inflation is running at 6.8% (which represents a real-terms pay cut), all members agreed that the cost of living crisis was the main reason why they were on strike.

Flavio noted that members “received an offer of an increase in pennies but the price of everything increases in pounds”. Another member, Charles, put it bluntly about why they were taking action: “If we didn’t go for a strike, [ISS] wouldn’t change their mind.”

Last year, ISS made a profit of £73m while 10 board members received almost £1 million between them in pay outs.

Some members on the picket have worked here many years and feel that the employer has an obligation to pay them fairly for their contributions to this success.

John, in his position for almost 20 years, said that “our employer makes almost a hundred million pounds a year and they are paying us peanuts. We have to put pressure on them because it is us who built this firm, it's the people like us on the

frontline who built it.”

Also on the picket line was Antoinette, who said: “We are not asking to earn as much as [ISS management and board members] - we are just asking for £16 an hour to make that difference in our lives.”

“ISS is supposed to take care of us as workers and I feel - and we all feel collectively - that they are not doing that,” she added. “It is a good job that we have PCS to speak on our behalf.”

On the picket line there was also support from civil servants who work in the department buildings outside of which members were picketing.

Tom, a rep in the department formerly known as BEIS, told us that these members working for ISS “are on strike because they are the core people who keep the building running - the security, the cleaners - and make everything work.”

The current strike action ends on 8 September but members are prepared to keep fighting through disruptive strike action if the employer does not offer a fair pay rise that can help them through the current cost-of-living crisis and beyond.

As William put it, “We are waiting for them to call us. Otherwise next week and the next week, we will continue [striking].”

Show your support

- Visit the next picket lines outside BEIS, 1 Victoria Street, SW1H 0ET from 8am to 10:00am, Wednesday (6 September) and Thursday (7 September).
- Send messages of support to [editor@pcs.org.uk](mailto:editor@pcs.org.uk)
- You can also support our striking members by making an [online donation to our strike fund](#).

Not yet a PCS member? [Join online today](#).